January 20 Off-Site Air Monitoring Summary Press Call
Opening Remarks

- Since last May, EPA has conducted off-site air monitoring in areas around the West Lake Landfill to document baseline conditions prior to any potential on-site construction or work.

- Today, EPA Region 7 is releasing new data that shows air quality around the West Lake Landfill Superfund Site, is consistent with what is found elsewhere in the greater St. Louis metropolitan area, and other Midwest cities.

- EPA's monitoring system sampled for alpha, beta, and gamma radiation, and typical solid waste landfill gases, such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and hydrogen sulfide.

- The radiation levels being measured indicate no releases of hazardous contaminants are posing threats.

- The radiation levels being measured are consistent with other Midwest cities. For alpha and beta radiation, all monitored median values were consistent with median values for the air monitor placed in St. Charles. Gamma radiation monitors around West Lake Landfill showed values that were also consistent with the variability of natural geological radiation sources in the area.

- I know that the people who live around the West Lake Landfill have too frequently experienced bad odors from the site and that impacts their quality of life.

- In contrast to the measurements of radiation and other pollutants, due to the methodology used in collecting the hydrogen sulfide data, EPA has low confidence in the reliability of that data. EPA is working on its methodology for collecting hydrogen sulfide data to provide the agency with more consistent results.

- EPA encourages the public to refer to the hydrogen sulfide data collected by the MDNR.

- St. Louis struggles with air quality in the same manner as other large industrial cities in the Heartland.

- From every indication, there are no releases of hazardous contaminants from the landfill that are currently posing an unacceptable threat to human health. Prior to any on-site construction, EPA will ensure an air monitoring system is in place to compare new readings against these baseline levels we're releasing today.

- EPA's efforts to monitor the air and conduct a thorough scientific analysis are vital to be able to ensure any construction activities are protective of public health.